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Beach Boys

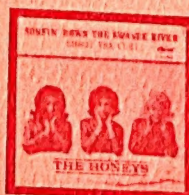


Survivors – Brian Redux

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Comment

Talk about Lazarus being raised from the dead. They were giving Brian two years to live when Dr. Eugene Landy again stepped in. Brian's weight had risen to over 310 lbs. His drug-taking behavior was back in the news. It seemed time to say prayers for the man, and be thankful for the hundreds of songs he gave us. But now...

Brian Wilson is trimmer than he's been since the mid-Sixties. He's answering questions at press conferences. He's playing the bass guitar. He's writing new songs. He's telling people that he feels great.

Only time will show whether Brian's present recovery will be a complete one, sufficient to allow him to create new records - whole records. Irregardless of the completeness of the product Brian comes up with in the next six months, or year, or whatever, it will be interesting to note the directions of his impulses.

In the partial recovery of 1976-1977, Brian primed the pump with early rock rhythms and keyboard-based Phil Spector production. He then eked out a few new songs characterized by strong lyricism, keyboard-dominated rhythms, and incomplete, although rather inspired, production. That was it.

The 1976-1977 tracks, from "Rock & Roll Music" to "It's Over Now," were a fragile, flickering flame which went out too soon. There were exciting, hopeful examples of personal impulse: the rocking keyboards of "Please Let Us Go On This Way," and "Honkin' Down The Highway;" the wise melody and harmony of "The Night Was So Young;" the truthful lyric in "Let's Put Our Hearts Together;" the careful instrumental mix of "Hey Little Tomboy" (my personal favorite from that period). But Brian never quite put it all together.

And yet his musical instincts have never failed. People are wrong when they speak of the death of Brian's talent. The 1976-1977 period proved that Brian never forgets what makes a song a good song. Indeed, he never writes a bad song.

It is enough to hear that Brian is again writing songs, to know that he is writing good songs. That is cause for celebration. We must hope for one further thing: it should be Brian who produces new Brian Wilson songs. Brian is a great songwriter as well as a great producer, and they go hand-in-hand. The last two Beach Boy albums demonstrated what happens when another producer attempts to interpret Brian Wilson compositions. Too much is lost.

And of course I am self-serving. The important thing is the health and happiness of Brian Wilson, the man who has given us hundreds of beautiful songs. We should be extremely grateful for that, and should hope, above all else, that Brian someday realizes his own sweet-sad refrain, "Wouldn't it be nice if we were older..."

Music Update

The fortunes of the Beach Boys took another turn for the better on April 6, 1983, without the aid of a new or old record release, and indeed, without any planned publicity. On that day Interior Secretary James Watt decreed that no rock and roll band would play the Washington Mall on July 4th because such music attracts the "wrong element."

Fans of the Beach Boys and rock and roll music considered this libel. The Beach Boys had played the Mall on two previous 4th's. An onslaught of opinion against Watt flooded Washington, and even Nancy Reagan and some of President Reagan's close advisors lined up behind the Beach Boys. By April 7, Watt had both spoken with the President about the situation, and offered a public apology (sort-of) via a press conference.

However, the desire of Watt to have Las Vegas entertainer Wayne Newton perform on the 4th had already been executed, so the Beach Boys were out and Newton was in. The President and Mrs. Reagan made amends, however, by inviting the Beach Boys to perform at the White House in a program designed to benefit the Special Olympics.

Because of the furor, towns from coast to coast, -both large and small- offered to host the Beach Boys. It was a publicity dream come true for the Beach Boys, whose concert attendance has been slipping, and who haven't released an album of new material since March, 1980.

And Mike Love got to write an article for the Washington Post.

Since then the band has continued through the summer on a schedule which must make them the number-one touring group in the world. They have concentrated on smaller, outdoor venues, like the 45th St. Pier in New York City, and Lanierland Music Park in Georgia. On July 4th they played a free concert on the boardwalk in Atlantic City, with 70,000 people on the beach.

They performed in ballparks following baseball games by both the San Diego Padres and San Francisco Giants.

The stage show has mostly retained the quality of last winter's tour, but with the constant work, individual Beach Boys have missed shows. When Mike missed a night in Cleveland, many of his lead vocals were assumed by Jeff Fosskett. At the same show "Runaway" was sung by -Matthew Jardine.

"California Girls" has been placed at the opening of the set once again. Carl has marketed his solo L.P. by doing John Fogerty's "Rockin' All Over The World." Mike has been paying tribute to John Lennon by singing Lennon's "Imagine." A regrettable performance.

Brian Wilson's weight, which peaked somewhere over 310 lbs in 1982, is now well below 200 lbs. His health is vastly improved thanks to the expensive around-the-clock program of Dr. Eugene Landy. Brian has performed at a majority of concerts this summer, even playing bass guitar at times. His vocals are still rough.

During a Washington Beach Boys interview, when asked about the impact of the James Watt controversy, Brian cited the stimulation of the band's business. He gave a solo interview to journalist Robert Hilburn - Brian's first in many years - and he considered the idea of going back into the studio: "You go in with the notion that... you really know your business; that you can't make a wrong move."

The Beach Boys continue to bank on the future health and recording efforts of Brian, supporting financially, the Landy program. They speak of getting Brian into the studio in early 1984, for a new album.

Although Brian has not been in the studio this year, he has been writing songs on the airplane between concert stops, using an electronic keyboard. Back in June he took time out for a 12-day survival course in the Colorado Rockies.

In June Brad Elliott got together with Capitol Records to put together a Beach Boys Rarities album. It should have been released by early August. (Capitol ST-12293) The tracks are as follow: side 1- "With A Little Help From My Friends," the Beatles song, recorded in 1967; "The Letter," the Box Tops hit, recorded in 1967; "I Was Made To Love Her," a longer version of the Stevie Wonder tune that appeared on Wild Honey; "You're Welcome," the B-side of the "Heroes & Villains" single; "The Lord's Prayer," the B-side of the "Little Saint Nick" single; "Bluebirds Over The Mountain," a stereo-separated version of the rare Dutch mix; "Celebrate The News," the B-side of the "Breakaway" single.

Side 2- "Good Vibrations," the alternate version that surfaced on the 1976 radio special; "Land Ahoy," an outtake from Surfin' Safari; "In My Room," sung in German; "Cottonfields," the single version; "All I Want To Do," a live 1969 version; "Auld Lang Syne," the Christmas album track minus Dennis' talk.

All of the tracks on Rarities came from the Capitol vaults, and were essentially unknown to Capitol until Brad Elliott went to Los Angeles to seek them out. He says there is not enough material in the Capitol vaults to make a second rarities album. A second album would have to involve the Beach Boys' own tapes.

One track that was to be included in the collection, but was dropped at the last minute was "Pamela Jean," by the Survivors. (See the Elliott interview.) There were also a few highly orchestrated (a la Christmas album) tracks which were not included, since they didn't fit into the mood of the album.



Carl Wilson's second solo album did not break into the national chart, but his single, "What You Do To Me," did manage to spend a few weeks in the top-100, peaking at 71. The second single from the album, "Givin' You Up," was released in late July.

Radio Shack says that the Mike & Dean cassette Rock 'N' Roll City has been selling well (consistently) in their stores. The single "Da Doo Ron Ron" b/w "Baby Talk" was not released commercially.

Mike completed a Christmas album which will be distributed in Radio Shack stores this fall and winter. It is another guest format, and will be available as both a cassette and an L.P. The tracks are as follow: "Carol Of The Bells" by the ensemble; "White Christmas" by Marilee Rush; "Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree" by 3 Dog Night; "Jingle Bells" by Paul Revere and the Raiders; "The Christmas Song" by Paul Revere and the Raiders; "Do You Hear What I Hear?" by Mary Macgregor and Mike Love; "Jingle Bell Rock" by Mike & Dean; "Sleigh Ride" by The Association; "Home For The Holidays" by The Association; "Winter Wonderland" by Bobby Goldsboro; "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" by Mike Love; "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" by the ensemble.

A one-hour video special which presents the entire album is to be offered to network TV this holiday season.

Solo Cups -the drinking cup firm- will distribute four million boxes of cups with Mike & Dean pictured on the cover, along with an offer to send for a single containing two songs from the Christmas album.

Mike & Dean and Paul Revere and the Raiders performed in Texas for the Radio Shack people, and they may do a tour in the future. Mike has expressed a desire to include his song "Brian's Back" in the next Radio Shack project.

Two bootlegged Beach Boys albums surfaced on the West Coast at the beginning of the summer. One is a rather unnecessary collection of single B-sides entitled Made In U.S.A. The other is a significant, high quality, stereo pressing called Landlocked. This features rare and unreleased tracks from the 1970-1971 period. (See ASM, winter '83)

The tracks are as follow: "Loop De Loop," "Susie Cincinnati," "San Miguel," "HELP Is On The Way," "Take A Load Off Your Feet," "Over The Waves" ("Carnival"), "I Just Got My Pay," "Sound Of Free," "Child Of Winter," "It's About Time" (drum track), "Tears In The Morning," "Good Time," "Big Sur," "Lady," "When Girls Get Together," "Lookin' At Tomorrow," "Til I Die" (two different versions).

Again, the quality of the record is surprisingly good. In addition, the sleeve offers good liner notes and the promise of a third bootleg L.P., Smile. At this point that record does not seem to exist.

The new Honeys album was released last spring by Rhino Records, and contains (1) a spirited, rockabilly rendition of Brian's "You Brought It All On Yourself," and (2) what turns out to be a marvelous, never-before-recorded Brian Wilson gem, "Go Away Boy." (See review and interview)

There are presently no plans for a single. Touring plans are up in the air, but the Honeys did open for the Beach Boys at one show in San Diego.

In the March issue of Guitar Player magazine famed guitarist Carol Kaye, who did much session work for Phil Spector in the early Sixties, and Brian Wilson in the mid-Sixties, had some interesting things to say about Brian.

Ms. Kaye said her first Beach Boy track was a bass part on "California Girls." She also remembered contributing bass parts to "Good Vibrations." She said sessions for Spector and Wilson were longer than usual, and she differentiated between the two by stating that in Phil's case the bassists would be given the song chords, and then would often come up with their own parts. On the other hand, Brian wrote every note for the bass parts to Beach Boy songs.

The Beach Boys vs. James Watt fiasco became something of a national inside joke. It is not uncommon to hear Johnny Carson or David Letterman refer to the Boys in their nightly monologues. When Vice President George Bush spoke with shuttle astronauts while they were in orbit, he said, "Well, you guys have managed to push the Beach Boys off the front pages."

Late news: On Wednesday, August 3, at the Beach Boys' Pacific Grove concert, in Los Angeles, something very good happened. At the beginning of the encore Brian Wilson walked onto stage alone, sat at the piano, and sang and played a brand new song. Its title is "It's Just A Matter Of Time."

SURFIN' U.S.A.

THE BEACH BOYS

SHUT DOWN

Interview: Rhino Records

Harold Bronson is an executive at Rhino Records. He is listed as executive producer of the new Honeys album, Ecstasy. Andrew Doe recently spoke with Mr. Bronson in England.

Bronson: The Honeys from the beginning. There's a Beach Boys and Beatles fan by the name of Richard Stevens who we know from coming into Rhino. He's credited on the back (of the album) with a thank you, and he came to Richard (Foos, Harold's partner at Rhino) with a tape of the Honeys, which was the Kessel's stuff, -I think. I can't remember exactly what it was, as we had to give the tape back. Four or five cuts... I'm sure if you told me, I'd know it. Anyway, Richard heard it and wanted to get involved. Initially, he came to me, and gave me the tape. I can't recall our exact motivations for getting involved at that level, but as we had more discussions, it crystallized into the fact that we thought it'd be neat to work with them as female vocalists, and also because of the whole legacy. So the next step was -we had a general meeting with the three of them, and we really liked them a lot, -they're really nice people.

Doe: When you say "the three..."

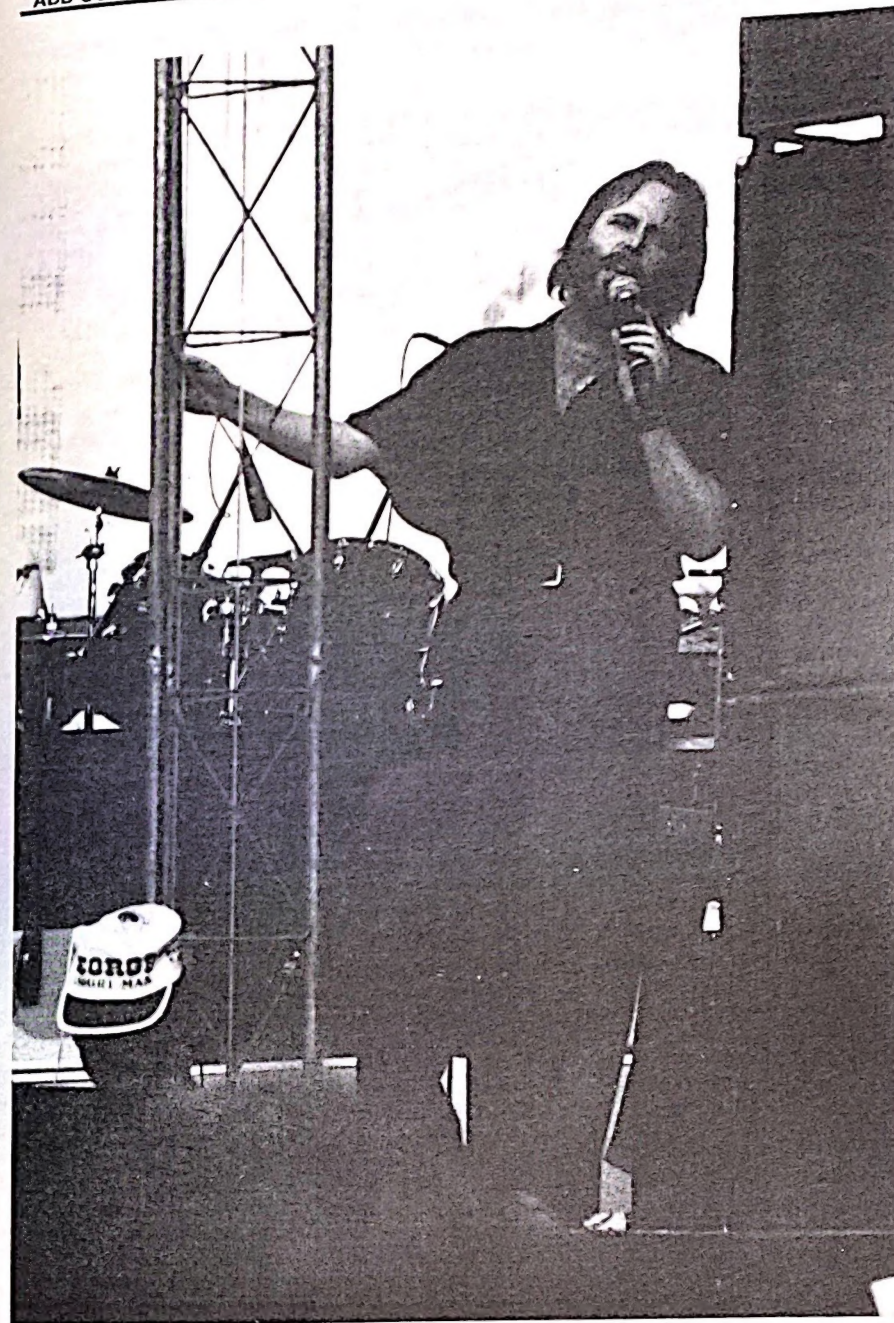
Bronson: I'm sorry. It was actually the four of them: Marilyn, Diane, Ginger, and Barbara.

Doe: What happened to her?

Bronson: Well, later on, as we started getting into it, pre-production and all that, it took longer than we anticipated, and she was starting to get some movie work, being an animal handler. She had a job somewhere outside the city, and there was another movie coming up in Canada or someplace, that didn't make it convenient. And around that time I think the other girls may have felt some lack of real commitment. It probably didn't mean as much to her as it did to the others. Barbara is one of the original signatories on the contract, but she bowed out a bit later.

Anyway, part of the original concept was to have them do some of Brian's material. We figured two or three songs, -as far as selling something like this, we felt that with a couple of unreleased Brian tracks on it, anybody who's a hard-core Beach Boys fan is gonna have to buy this record. So we had some discussions with them... and basically their sound, as opposed to the American Spring and early Honeys sound, -they wanted a harder sound, which was a little bit of a surprise to me, because that evidence wasn't there before; and the fact that they're in their thirties now, -it seemed surprising that people would opt for a harder sound, because when you get older, you usually start to mellow out.

In trying to understand what the sound should be, before we proceed, -basically the best example is the Raspberries...a song like their second hit. I played them this, and they said, "That's it,



that's exactly what our sound should be." So then I had some idea for the next steps.

Another thing which we like to do, and which they were fortunately very open to, was suggesting material. I think we have a really good ear for good songs. So I made up some tapes, and suggested some things. And Richard did too. But as far as the Brian tracks go, originally they said, "We don't have anything," and I really had to press them. And then they said, "Well, there's nothing that would fit." And they played me a couple of Honeys-styled things - the old 'Honeys- which kinda didn't fit, and then Marilyn said, "There's this one that was never finished..." and she started singing - in my living room- "Go away boy..." And I thought it was great, so I said, "Yeah, that's it." That was one, and the other was "You Brought It All On Yourself." Do you know of that?

Doe: I've heard the original. It's great.

Bronson: Me too. They played me it on a tape, and I was surprised it was never released. So those were the two we decided to do, and we also redid "The One You Can't Have." It was supposed to be on the album, but they didn't like their vocals on it, and thought that stylistically it didn't fit, -so we left it off. We might redo the vocals and put it on the B-side of something at some point.

The first step was the direction, the sound; the second was the songs. "Ecstasy" was something I picked because the Raspberries singles were great songs, and because it seemed like it should be the Honeys' sound. I picked "Indian Giver." I think that's a hit song; it's a real fun thing. "Temptation Eyes" was one they did, -a great choice because they did a great version of it. And "Be My Baby" was obviously Brian's all-time favorite song, and Marilyn was telling me that he would play it like twenty times every day. That's all she used to hear, so...

Now, producers, -I'll give you some background on these mysterious guys.

Doe: One thing I'd like to clear up, -Brian had absolutely nothing to do with the album?

Bronson: No, nothing at all. We thought it would be great if he came down and played piano on something, just to have him there, but I think on one level, they'd been so much in his shadow that they felt they didn't want to be relying on his reputation or interest in him -that was one reason. Also, during the time that this was recorded, he wasn't in that great a shape; it was hinted that having him in the studio might not have been such a good idea.

OK, producers: originally I was thinking I was going to be producing this, but I just didn't have enough time. Louie (Naktin) is sort of my right-hand man. He's been on a lot of Rhino Records as a guitar player, and he's also an excellent songwriter and arranger. Maxfield is his stage name, and this album is the first time he's

ever credited himself under his real name of Natkin. That's basically him. I have a tremendous amount of respect for his ability.

Mark Avnet is another guy who's a genius. He also owns Mad Dog studios, where the album was recorded. He's an excellent bass player. Having worked with him, I knew his sensibilities, not only on a musical level, but also as a technician. He's real good with sound. So I thought it'd be a good project for both of them to produce. I figured they could temper each other, and that's how they were selected. They've never really produced any record before, but they did an excellent job, much better than anybody else could've done. And the record is much better than anything the girls have ever done. Louie initially had a bit more time, and he started working with the girls in pre-production. "Running Away From Love," -Louie wrote with them at one of these sessions. "Go Away Boy," -Brian had basically the melody and the first verse.

Doe: That was "Go Away Boy" and not originally "Funny Boy?"

Bronson: No, it was always "Go Away Boy," and anyway, the girls finished off the lyrics and I think Louie wrote the bridge. Marilyn played it for Brian on the phone and he cried. "Girls Are Vicious" was another one that Louie wrote with them. It's a real interesting song because girls themselves are singing about how vicious they are.

"Love You Forever" was a song Mark Avnet had that he wrote with Bobby Greenburg. Mark is really into the Beach Boys, so it sounds very Beach Boys because the sensibility is there. This other thing, "Boy From Nowhere," is, I guess, a reject from a Gary Myrick and the Figures album, which is coming out soon. Louie played it for me and I gave them the OK to do it.

Doe: You mentioned in a letter to me way back that you were considering "Happy," the Stones song.

Bronson: I suggested that to them, but they decided not to do it. -Almost going to, but ultimately they didn't.

Ah, the cover idea was basically mine. I always wanted to do a cover that was a movie poster motif. So we felt that Ecstasy was a good title for the record, as most of the cuts were about love on some level, and the trials thereof...-and also the back cover with the lobby card.

Doe: One thing, going back to production, is that, not to put too fine a point on it, the girls are singing much better than they ever have before.

Bronson: Oh yeah. That's good production. In the past, with the Kessels or whatever, it was like, "That's fine," as opposed to someone saying, "Look, Marilyn, that's not quite good enough." I was not

there, and I don't know what really transpired, but Mark is a really good singer, and Louie's really good with pitch, so you have two singers producing other singers -and therefore a bit more aware of what would be a great vocal or something really mediocre. Diane sings lead on "You Brought It All On," Marilyn and Ginger share "Temptation Eyes," and then Marilyn and Ginger take four each.

Doe: Any follow-up potential? You mentioned a B-side, which implies a single release.

Bronson: There are ideas we've been kicking around, but nothing is definite. We thought about doing a video; we thought about releasing "Indian Giver" as a twelve-inch, with "Temptation Eyes" and "The One You Can't Have" on the B-side. It's difficult to say if we'll actually do these things.

Doe: Are they going to go on the road?

Bronson: They want to. They're looking around for musicians at the moment. They have been rehearsing themselves, singing along to backing tracks. I'd like to see them open up for the Beach Boys. I think it'd be real good. Carl heard the record and really flipped over it, which really pleased the girls, because he's never said that he's liked anything else that they've ever done. Brian's heard a few songs over the phone...



"Ecstasy" STARRING THE HONEYS
DIANE ROVELL • GINGER BLAKE • MARILYN WILSON

Review: Ecstasy

by Gary Gidman

Of all the acts that Brian Wilson produced outside the Beach Boys, his obvious favorite was a group of three girls, the Honeys. Brian's efforts on behalf of his wife, Marilyn, her sister, Diane, and their cousin, Ginger, exceed those of all other extracurricular projects, in terms of songwriting, arranging, producing, and even performing.

In the catalogue of songs by the Honeys, and their 1970's manifestation, American Spring, one can find some very impressive Brian Wilson creations, including "The One You Can't Have," "He's A Doll," "Good Time" (much better than the Beach Boy version), and "Shy'n' Away." A good deal of unreleased material exists, with "California Feeling" and "It's Like Heaven" being examples of strong B.W. compositions.

In the last several years Marilyn and Diane, who had worked as a duo called American Spring in the Seventies, were looking for a new recording contract. At first they conscripted their other sister, Barbara, to make it a trio, but then Ginger returned, and so the original Honeys were back together. After a succession of independent producers and record company rejections, the girls finally ended their ten-year absence from the music marketplace with a deal from Rhino records, and a brand new album.

Ecstasy (Rhino RNLP 851) is produced by Lou Naktin and Mark Avnet. It is a clean production, reminiscent, to this listener, of James Guercio's work with Chicago, except for the occasional use here of echo, presumably for a Spector-Wilson ambience.

The performances, both vocal and instrumental, are energetic, and sometimes inspired. The resulting image of the group is changed somewhat, to the contemporary "tough girl" stylings typified by Pat Benatar. It is not hard rock, but leans much of the time in that direction. Although this reviewer is not crazy about that musical style, it should be said that those tracks which evidence such an intent: "Running Away From Love," "Boy From Nowhere," "Girls Are Vicious," and "Ecstasy," -are very well done.

The musical arrangements, built around strong drumming and massed guitars, are effective, and Ginger Blake's gritty vocals are particularly interesting, striking a stylistic balance between the aforementioned Ms. Benatar, and the archetypal '60's tough girl, Ronnie Spector.

Elsewhere on *Ecstasy* are found several bright, harmony-laden cover versions of well known songs from the Sixties. "Indian Giver," with its cute "ooh-wah-wah-wah" chorus vocals, and dumb "Witchy Woman" instrumental motifs, is pleasant fun. "Temptation Eyes," and "Be My Baby" are exceptional, with both featuring well developed, contrapuntal block harmonies, an obvious nod in Brian Wilson's direction. "Be My Baby" is, in fact, one of the better covers done over the years, although nothing will approach the genius of the original.

"Love You Forever" is a moderate tempo ballad, a little weak in the melody, but saved by fine vocals around a piano-based arrangement. The final two songs which fill the album are Brian Wilson compositions, and I've saved them for last, as they are certainly the highlights here.

"You Brought It All On Yourself" dates back to January, 1964, and was written by Brian. A recording by the Honeys from that period, produced by Brian, reportedly exists. The version presented here is radically reworked, opting for a boogie-woogie rhythm, built around a walking piano-and-bass figure, punctuated by saxophones and a heavy, bluesy guitar.

The song is a brisk exercise in phrasing. The verse melody hops rhythmically on and off the beat. The refrain is catchy. The harmonies are economical but full, typical of Brian's arranging habits back in the Sixties. The dynamics of the answering, or echoing vocals are inspired.

In my opinion "You Brought It All On Yourself" is not one of Brian's compositional masterpieces, yet its presence on this album invites comparison with the other material, and, not surprisingly, it manages to shine brightly. It is eclipsed, nevertheless, by the album's closing track, and centerpiece, "Go Away Boy."

"Go Away Boy" was supposedly started by Brian around 1965-1966. He nearly completed the music and wrote the first three lines of lyric. The modern Honeys finished it off, -and not badly, I might add. Not that it mattered greatly; as in much of Brian's work of that vintage, the music far outshines the lyric.

The relationship between melodic line and harmonic progression in "Go Away Boy" is remarkable, for it is very complex, yet flows ever so smoothly. The tonality places it in the company of "Let Him Run Wild," and "I'm Waiting For The Day." The Honeys' arrangement is straightforward, as befits the nature of the piece. Harmonies are full but restrained, and Marilyn Wilson's vocal is also straightforward, and emotionally to the point.

With a lyrical rewrite this song would have been a perfect candidate for Pet Sounds. The only element that is painfully out of place is the heavy guitar solo, which was probably included in order to unify the album.

All in all, Ecstasy is a very respectable collection. I had some initial resistance in listening to it, probably due to the fact that the production and much of the musical content does not reflect Brian Wilson's influence. I think I have come to regard the Honeys, and the Beach Boys as well, as merely vehicles for Brian's musical aspirations and conceits. I can't help but wonder what this album might have sounded like had Brian Wilson produced it.

Interview:

The Survivors

by Brad Elliott

The Survivors have been one of the greater mysteries of the Brian Wilson/Beach Boys saga. For years, it was assumed the Survivors were simply the Beach Boys under an assumed name. The liner notes to the nearly-definitive Capitol Years boxed set related, "As the Four Seasons were later to do successfully, the Beach Boys wanted to cut a record and release it under another name to see if it would be a hit. Needless to say, the Beach Boys' game back-fired on them, and a superb, if not spectacular, track was lost to history." It makes a great story, but it's also false.

In reality, the Survivors were another group with which Brian Wilson was involved. Just as he had the Beach Boys with his family, Brian had the Survivors with his friends - specifically, Bob Norberg, Rich Peterson, and Dave Nowlen.

To get the full story on the Survivors, I talked with Peterson and Nowlen, separately, several months apart. The interviews were fascinating. Both men offered many anecdotes about Brian and the Beach Boys, and provided valuable insights into Brian's world.

Nowlen, now 39 years old, is a private pilot, flying planes for the chief executive of a major corporation. He continues to dabble in music, writing songs for his own and his family's enjoyment. Last year, a noted country-and-western producer expressed interest in a song Nowlen had recorded.

Peterson no longer goes by that name. About 1970, he changed his last name to his family's original Armenian surname, Alarian. Now 38, Alarian is very much in demand as a lighting man in Hollywood. A decade ago, he gave up a career as a bit-part television actor to concentrate on the lighting business. He has worked with a number of television programs, including Kasey Kasem's syndicated "American Top Ten," as well as theatrical presentations. He also has provided the lighting for several music videos which have appeared on MTV.

For better continuity and ease of reading, the two interviews have been edited into one. RA is Rich Alarian. DN is Dave Nowlen. EE is myself.

EE: Rich, you lived in the same neighborhood with the Wilsons when you were growing up?

RA: When we were growing up, no. I lived in Lennox and they lived in Hawthorne.

EE: How did you first meet the Wilsons?

RA: I was 13 years old. My next door neighbors in Lennox, I used to babysit their two kids. They were 4 or 5-year old kids. My next

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door neighbors moved to Hawthorne a year later and lived three doors down from the Wilsons. I still babysat, but when I wasn't available, Carl would babysit. Being on the same block, as I used to babysit three, four nights a week, we used to play hide-and-go-seek, kick-the-can, and go to the fair and sit out front and smoke cigarettes when we weren't supposed to. We did all the kid things. This went on for a couple of years. Dennis was a jerk. Carl and I became very good friends. In fact, we had a crush on the same girl.

Carl and I used to sit out front, with this girl that we had the crush on. He had this old guitar. His parents got him this Spanish guitar, like a six dollar guitar. It only had three strings on it. He'd sit there and he was terrible, he couldn't play it but he'd try. He'd hold his fingers together on the top and try to make chords and we'd sit out there and sing and fool around and howl at the moon.

I stopped babysitting, 'cause I was 15 years old and getting older. I didn't see the guys for about a year or so. At that time, they became the Beach Boys and I didn't hang around with them. They came out with "Surfin'" on that Brand X or whatever the hell label it was. One day I walked into a record store and I see their pictures on an album and I go, "You gotta be kidding me." So I go over there and they go, "Yeah." They'd cut this record and Murry, the father, was their agent and business manager and got 'em started.

At that time, I was a senior in high school. I started going over and visiting them. Brian and I started chummin' together. It was a little bit of envy, but I was proud of the guys. Then they had trouble with David Marks. He was giving them trouble 'cause he was a young kid. They wanted to dump him 'cause Dennis never got along with him. At that time, Brian said, "If you could only play the guitar, Rich, we'll make you a Beach Boy. If there's someway we can teach you to play the guitar in two weeks, you're gonna be a Beach Boy." There's no way I could do that.

At the time, I had been writing and cutting records as the Beach Boys. We would go and do recording sessions at Gold Star when the guys were in New York, when the Beach Boys were in New York. We cut the Surfer Girl album, four of the songs, five of the songs on there. We were the Beach Boys. With Brian, we were the Beach Boys.

BE: When you say "we," who do you mean?

RA: Bob Norberg, myself, and Brian. We used to hang around together and go in and cut records. When the Beach Boys were doing a lot of traveling, Brian didn't want to go with them after a while, he just always wanted to stay home. That Surfer Girl album was done when they were in New York, when the group was in New York. At least half of that album was done at Gold Star recording studios, while the guys were in New York, because they had a deadline to get the record out and the guys weren't here. We went in and we matched the Beach Boys' sound.

ADD SOME MUSIC

When we did "Surfer Girl"... that was the first thing that we fooled with... I did this falsetto thing. Brian would sing in my ear, so I could get the high-pitched voice like him.

I used to sit in on a lot of decisions. I'll never forget when the attorney called him... it was when he did that surfin' song ("Surfin' U.S.A."). Chuck Berry's attorney called while Chuck Berry was in prison, to sue Brian because he stole the music. Brian said, "Rich, what am I gonna do?" Subconsciously, in his mind, Brian didn't know how he got it. I remember going through all that, with the lawyers, having to settle with them, and share royalty rights on it because it was Berry's music.

He used to go with a girl named Judy Bowles. Small world - Judy Bowles used to go to school with me. Judy was a couple of years younger than Brian. She was his first crush. He was in love with Judy. Her brother... I can't remember his name, was it Jimmy?... her brother was a few years younger, and he was a surfer, a real avid surfer. All the words like that... you know, Rincon and Wiameah Bay... I think that was "Surfin' U.S.A."... all those words, they came from Judy and Jimmy. I was a hodad, I wasn't a surfer. Neither was Brian. Brian wouldn't know what to do with a surfboard. In fact when they took the picture for "Surfin' Safari," they didn't know anything about surfing. When that record came out, Dennis... he was a rowdy like me, he'd get kicked out of school... he used to try and surf. I remember when he used to get beat bad. The board would hit him in the head. The guy couldn't surf. But he was the only one out of all the guys who tried it. The rest of the guys weren't surfers.

BE: Didn't you live in the same apartment complex with Brian?

RA: This is how it started. Bob Norberg and Brian lived in an apartment at Crenshaw and... I guess it was Woodward. Then I got out of school. I started rooming with Dave Nowlen right next door. When I was over at the (Wilson) house, Brian said, "Well, hey, my next door neighbor needs a roommate." That's how that association started. We were living next door to each other... I don't remember, but it wasn't very long. about three, four, five months.

BE: Dave, when and how did you first meet Brian?

DN: I was living on Crenshaw Boulevard in Los Angeles, at the Crenshaw Park Apartments. It was real close to Hollywood Park race-track. And also close to Hawthorne airport... in that general vicinity. I had been playing and practicing with a group. I had moved out from Michigan several months prior, had been practicing with a group called The Pharoahs and we were trying to get something going. We held practice sessions at my apartment periodically.

BE: Did you ever cut a record as The Pharoahs?

DN: No, we didn't. I had previously cut a record in Michigan and it flopped, in my senior year of high school. I came out to California thinking I was a real hotshot. So one day, out of the clear... we're practicing in the apartment, there's a knock on the door, and I went over and opened the door. There was this nondescript kind of a guy standing there at the door. He said, "Hey, I've heard you guys practicing over here. You guys are real good. Would you mind if I came in and listened?" I said, "No, come on in. Sit down." So he came in and sat down for a while and we kept right on practicing. During a break in one of the songs, he said, "Have you guys ever done any recording?" I puffed myself up to about 10 feet tall and I said, "Oh yeah. Have you ever heard of a group called Dave & The Shadows?" He said, "No." (laughs) He said, "Have you ever heard of The Beach Boys?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Well, I'm Brian Wilson, leader of..." In my mind, I said, "Oh shit, I stuck my foot in my mouth this time." So I said, "Well, you know, it's really nice to meet you." He said, "Well, I live right next door. Why don'tcha come over some time? We can get together and sit down and do some practicing or some playing together, and just talk." So that's how it started. And naturally I was real excited about finding Brian, or him finding me. That's basically how we bumped into each other. That's when he was living with Bob Norberg in the apartment there.

BE: When was this, that you met Brian, roughly?

DN: When did "Surfer Girl" come out?

BE: July '63.

DN: Okay, if it was July, then it was August or September, because it had just been out. In fact, Brian had a 1962 red Chevrolet Impala that was raked in the front end and everything, and we used to drive around in that. I remember when "Surfer Girl" would come on, we would start singing the parts, and when we'd get to the high parts, he'd say, "You'll never make it." I always ended up making the high notes. He'd just kind of look at me like he couldn't believe that somebody else could make the falsettos high as he could. So yeah, it was just a couple of months after that, after "Surfer Girl" came out, that I met Brian.

I can't remember exactly how long after that, but I started playing in clubs around Los Angeles, like The Cockatoo, which was over on Hawthorne Boulevard, and a couple of other fairly decent places, but it was just like 9 to 1, 45 on, 15 off. Myself and three other guys. \$25 a night and all you could drink. One of those type of deals.

I had been over on several occasions to Brian's house, and he'd take me over and introduce me to Murry and to Audree. I had met Dennis and I think I had met Dave Marks, who lived right across the street. Of course, Bob Norberg and I knew each other by that time. I guess I had mentioned... I don't remember the exact conversation, but I had mentioned to Murry that I was short on bucks

or something like that. He said, "Well, I can give you some work here at the house if you wanna come over and work. I need the living room painted, I need the..." They had a hardwood floor in their house there in Hawthorne and every time you walked on the floor, it creaked. The hardwood was starting to loosen up. The whole floor was hardwood. We had to drive these little nails in all the cracks to push the boards further apart to tighten the floor up. I did that.

Oh, I remember a funny incident that happened one day. Bob Norberg was helping me too, because Bob needed some extra money. So Bob was down there. You know, hardwood is... HARD. And they got these really thin nails to drive down between the boards. Bob had this pile of nails about like this, I mean it was just huge, and they were all bent and Murry came by, you know. And Murry and they were all bent and Murry came by, you know. And Murry was... he had this disgusted look on his face, like, "You just ruined a whole mess of my nails there." And Murry said, "What are those?" And without even cracking a smile, Bob said, "They're defective." (laughs) I thought it was just classic. "They're defective." (laughs again)

I put new trim around the windows, the baseboard, and the ceiling. I can't remember if I repainted or repapered Carl's bedroom. Carl was still living there.

BE: Carl and Dennis?

DN: Uhhh... No, just Carl was living at home at that time. If Dennis was living there, he wasn't around very much. He had that Corvette, that new blue Corvette of his at the time, which must have been... yeah, because it was a '64 Corvette, so it must have been late '63.

BE: You mentioned there was a story about the song "Be True To Your School."

DN: Yeah, Bob and I and Murry were in the living room. They had an organ and a piano in their living room that Brian used to play on. We had all the furniture moved out towards the center of the living room and draped with paint drapes. We were rolling paint on the stucco walls inside. Brian came in and Murry wanted to get him to do some work and he didn't want anything to do with that. So he and Murry had some light words, no big hassle, but they had some words and Brian ran out and jumped in his car and split. About 30 minutes later or so, he came back in the house. He was really excited. He came running in the screen door in the front of the living room and said, "Hey, wait a minute, stop. Everybody's gotta stop. I got something you gotta hear." And he ran over and pulled the drape off the piano and sat down at the piano and said, "Bob, you and Dave come here. I've got parts I want you to sing." We went over to the piano and he did the intro to "Be True To Your School" and gave us our parts. He had the basic idea and most of the words down already. Of course, I don't know if he had been thinking about the song prior, but he wasn't gone

any longer than a half-hour before he came back and sat down at the piano. When he came through the screen door, he was real excited. I mean, he wasn't that excited when he left the house, when Murry was trying to get him to work. But he was really excited about what he had just come up with. "When some loud brag-gart tries to put you down..."

RA: "Be True To Your School." That thing was done with the Honeys and... you wouldn't believe the people who were in on that session, clapping in the background. "Be True To Your School," we all sang on that. We did that at Capitol Records, downstairs in the basement at Capitol.

EE: Dave, were you involved in any Beach Boys or Brian Wilson recordings, other than The Survivors?

DN: No, I was in the studio a lot of times when the Beach Boys were doing their recordings, but I never participated in any of them. I did participate with the group called The Honeys. There's a song called "The One You Can't Have." There's a section on there where there's some clapping, some timed clapping. We all stood around a mike and did that. But no vocals.

EE: Were you ever involved in writing songs with Brian?

DN: No, I wasn't, but Rich was. Rich was not a friend of mine in the beginning, Rich was a friend of Brian's before I ever met him. Rich had been helping Brian write car songs.

EE: What Beach Boys songs did you write?

RA: "Custom Machine," "No Go Showboat." I was a car-crazy guy. I was really into automobiles. That was my trip. "No Go Showboat," "Custom Machine," those words were mine. They weren't Roger Christian's, they weren't Brian Wilson's, they were my words. Brian had the music, I had the words. Brian would turn around and say, "Are you sure about that? Is that what they call that? Are you sure?" I'd say, "Yeah." I'd give him all the words and then we'd try to put them together in a rhyme. Then we'd sit there and Brian would make music. That's how all that stuff originated. I was inspirational in those things because I knew the vernacular. Brian had no idea of automobiles, especially like the custom machines. That was my realm, that's what I did.

EE: Roger Christian is credited with the lyrics on those two songs.

RA: Roger Christian did all the "Little Deuce Coupes," all those things about high-performance racing stuff. Anything that had to do with customized cars, metal flake paint jobs, those came from me, they didn't come from Roger Christian.

EE: Why didn't you get songwriting credit?

RA: That was our deal, that Brian would pay for all our recording fees and all that other stuff. He didn't want to share royalties with me. I was Brian's right-hand man. He promised me, "Rich, the day will come that we'll have the Survivors and you're the lead singer of the Survivors."

Brian spent thousands of dollars of recording fees for us when Dave and I used to go in and record. Brian forked it, he paid the bill. We'd go in, he'd pay for the musicians. We'd have musicians just like the Beach Boys would have, 'cause the Beach Boys didn't know how to play. I was there when they'd go into a recording session when they were in town and we had all Hollywood professional musicians. Brian was the only one who had any creativity. Carl couldn't play guitar if his life depended on it. He grew into that. And same with Dennis Wilson. Dennis couldn't play the drums, he just pounded on them. And every time we had a recording session until Brian and I parted ways, it was always Hal Blaine. It was Hal Blaine that played the drums.

EE: How did the Survivors single happen?

DN: Brian made overtures about producing a record for us. He would do the writing of the song, he would so the production of the song and try to get it released on Capitol. The first song was "Wich Stand." Wich Stand was one of the two most popular drive-in teenage hangout spots in Southern California. It was extremely well known. The Wich Stand was called The Sandwich Stand, but everybody called it the Wich Stand. "Hey, we'll see you at the Wich Stand." It was one of these drive-in car-hop kind of places.

Now, the A&W was at one end of Hawthorne Boulevard. The A&W and the Wich Stand are probably 10 miles apart. One's at one end of town and one's at the other end of town. So it used to be this constant road race, with all the hot rods, the little deuce coupes and everything. You'd go to the Wich Stand and you'd cruise that. (Quoting:) "A car with four honeys just split, but they won't get far. It's four and four now, but we can get eight in our car." Those were the words to "Wich Stand," which Brian wrote. It was really a well known spot and I guess he thought that people would recognize the Wich Stand for being what it was in Southern California and that it would go over. So we went into Gold Star Studios and we did that. I sang the lead on "Wich Stand."

EE: Who were The Survivors?

DN: Myself, Bob Norberg, Brian Wilson and Rich Alarian.

EE: How was that lineup chosen? Was it simply the people that Brian was working with outside the group at the time?

DN: Bob Norberg had Bob & Sheri and he hadn't really gotten off the ground, so Brian included him in the group as a vocal and one of

"Wich Stand" By BRIAN WILSON
DAVE NOWLEN
RICH DEFENSEN
STEVE RUST

WE CRUISED THE A+W AND NOW WE'RE HEADIN'

TO THE WICH STAND

OOOH - - - - CRUISIN' TO THE WICH STAND

OOOH - - - - CRUISIN TO THE STAND

WICH STAND WICH STAND
CRUISIN TO THE WICH STAND

WICH STAND WICH STAND
CRUISIN TO THE WICH STAND

WICH STAND WICH STAND

WE CRUISED THE A+W AND NOW WE'RE HEADIN'

TO THE WICH STAND (TO A)

VERSES

WE WERE DOWN THE STAIR IN OUR METAL FLOOR
WE WERE WAITIN IN LINE HOPEIN FOR AN ALL TIME SPOT
A CAR AND 4 HONEY'S JUST SPLIT BUT THEY WON'T GET

BLUE GRAND PRIZ, THE SALT GUN ROLLS THE WINDOW
WE LUCKED OUT GOOD MAN THERE'S HONEY'S ALL OVER THE
FAR, ITS HANDY MAN BUT WE CAN GET 8 IN THIS CAR.

DOWN AND SAYE FOLLOW ME. (TO END VERSE)
Let (CRUISIN TO THE WICH STAND)

Note: The lyric in the chorus of "Wich Stand" is in Brian's handwriting. The verses are in Dave Nowlen's.

The Survivors. And naturally the favor to Rich. And because Brian and I had already sung and fooled around together, I got asked to be in the group also.

I don't know what Brian had in mind as a group, if he was just basically trying to return the favor or if he had any visions of the group ever continuing past that record.

BE: How did you get tapped to be the lead vocalist?

DN: Rich wanted to sing the lead vocal and I remember he and Brian arguing back and forth, him telling Rich, "Rich, you don't have a lead voice. You can't do the lead vocal." Rich was pretty upset that he had to sing 'oohs' and 'aahs' in the background.

RA: On that one, Brian was singing in all of our ears. He didn't want to have his voice on there at all. On that thing, Brian said, "I don't want anybody to know that I had anything to do with it." He wanted to see if he could get a sound for his talent, for his ability for music, without the public thinking it's Brian Wilson. We spent hours, DAYS on that sucker. We'd sit there and sing it, and he'd pump into my ear the falsetto. I was real good at falsetto. I could double Brian easily. We sounded just like him.

BE: Who were the musicians on it?

DN: They were myself, Bob Norberg, Brian, Hal Blaine, and two saxophone players that Brian used to work with a lot.

BE: You and Bob played guitar?

DN: Mmm-hmm.

BE: And Brian played bass?

DN: Brian played bass and piano. Then the two saxophone players... God, I used to remember their names, but I can't anymore. But definitely Hal, because I had met Hal before, with the Honeys, their sessions, things like that.

So then we went in and mixed the tracks, took the master and had a demo disc cut from that, took it over to Capitol Records. All four of us go in there and we sat down in this guy's office...

RA: Jim Economides, who was the A&R man at Capitol Records.

DN: He put it on the record player and played the thing all the way through and went, "My God, it's good, but it sounds just like the Beach Boys. We can't produce a record that's going to be in competition with you guys, because you guys are already under contract to us." We got up and got out of there. Brian was really pissed. He kind of stormed out and said, "Okay, by God, if that's what they want, if they want us to get away from the Beach Boys

sound, I'll come up with something that doesn't sound anywhere close to the Beach Boys."

EE: You said Brian wrote "Wich Stand," but the writing credits on your score sheet of the song list several other people also, -you and Rich and somebody named Steve Rusk.

DN: Yes, that's correct, but the basic tune was written by Brian. We interjected words and things here and there or just gave him ideas, the same as Rich was doing for the car songs. But I would give the basic writing credits for "Wich Stand" to Brian.

EE: Who was Steve Rusk?

DN: Steve was just a guy that was trying to get started in the music business. And he kind of hung out with me in my apartment and was a runaway from home basically. He was always around.

Up at the top of there (the score sheet)... I haven't changed it since the Sixties, I've just kept it in my memorabilia... I have myself written down there, Rich Alarian, Steve Rusk, and Brian Wilson. Even though I can't remember what it was that he did with the song, I'm sure that Steve did have something to do with writing a few words here or there or giving us an idea for the song.

RA: "Wich Stand" never came out. It was shelved. There's a master sitting someplace. I had a master dub and like a dummy... at the time I was young and I was trying to impress some girl I was going out with at the time. I let her use it and I lost it. I'm sure Brian has it. It was done at Gold Star Recorders. In fact, when we went in to cut that record, Jack Nitzsche was there and Phil Spector.

(Alarian suggested the name of the group. At a meeting of the soon-to-be Survivors, "the group suggested like a hundred different names," he recalls. One of Alarian's suggestions was 'The Survivors.' His reasoning was, "We still are survivin'. We still are singing." However, no one was particularly taken with the name at that time. But at a later get-together, Brian told Bob and Rich (Dave wasn't present) that he had decided 'The Survivors' had the right ring to it. According to Rich, Brian acted like the name had been his own idea and assumed credit for naming the group, never acknowledging that Rich had initially suggested the name.)

EE: "Pamela Jean" was written in the style of Dion...

DN: Brian was determined to change the style, to get it away from the Beach Boys sound, so that we could go on and get a record out. It was only a matter of days until he came back and said, "Hey, I've got another song for us to do." And that turned out to be "Pamela Jean."

RA: At this time, I was going with a girl named Pamela Jean Adams.

Brian and I were sitting there and I came up with all the words. Those were my words.

DN: We went and practiced it in his apartment, right next door to mine, and then went back down to Gold Star.

EE: Who were the musicians on that recording?

DN: Same people.

EE: You and Bob again on guitars? And Brian on bass?

DN: Right.

EE: I don't think there are any guitars on that recording, though. I think it's drums and horns and a bass. It's very sparse instrumentation.

DN: No, I'm sure there's guitar in there. I'm sure that we played guitar on there.

EE: The sax players are on that also.

DN: And the clapping and all that stuff. The clapping was put on afterwards. The saxophones were put on afterwards. We spent considerable time that day. It was like a six, seven-hour day in the studio.

EE: Is it the same four vocalists?

DN: Exactly. Murry was there at both sessions, too. He would come out after you goofed something up. He'd come out and he'd say, "You gotta lighten your voices up and sound younger," and stuff like that. He was kind of giving direction from the control room.

EE: Brian sings the lead on "Pamela Jean," doesn't he?

RA: It's Brian, but it's me. It's one of those things where he would sing in my ear. I would sing that vocal. Then he would sweeten it by going over it two or three more times with his voice.

EE: Whose vocal is the lead? Who's the prominent voice on it?

RA: It's a mix. The record that you hear is not totally Brian Wilson, it's me.

EE: The record was accepted this time by Capitol, without any problems?

RA: We went to Jim Economides and he said, "Great. This is a great sound. We're gonna press it." But they put it on hold, because that's when the Beach Boys hit strong. They didn't want to push us out right away, because they were afraid that we would drown. Then the Beatles came along and they threw the record out. Supposedly it only sold a few thousand copies up north, Northern California. But that record was made... probably the summer of '63.

- BE: It came out in January 1964, but the files at Capitol show they had the tape in September 1963.
- RA: The thing was supposed to come out in September. We had done this in the summer of '63, and it was supposed to come out in September. We pushed Brian and he called Capitol and they put him off: "We're gonna wait, we're gonna wait, we're gonna wait."
- BE: With Capitol's master tape of "Pamela Jean," there's a note to the effect that in December 1963, one of the Beach Boys, presumably Brian, picked up the tape one day and returned it the next. The term used for the returned tape is "revised."
- RA: Brian used to do a lot of stuff like that. Brian was notorious for that. Brian used to fool around a lot with sound. He used to like overdubbing. He may have gone back and added some more instruments to it or he might have added another track to it. But as far as the vocals, no revisions were made. You listen to that record and there isn't anyone but Brian, Bob, Dave and I on there.
- BE: "Car Crazy Cutie" is the same melody as "Pamela Jean." Which came first?
- DN: I don't really know. I was kind of offended when I first heard "Car Crazy Cutie," because I thought that he had taken "Pamela Jean" and rewritten the words to make it "Car Crazy Cutie" and put it out. I thought, "He's taken OUR song and put different words to it and released it as something else."
- RA: "Pamela Jean" came first. That upset us. We cut "Pamela Jean" and it was sitting there. That record was made and accepted by Capitol Records way before "Car Crazy Cutie."
- BE: "Car Crazy Cutie" was recorded and released after "Pamela Jean" had been cut?
- RA: Exactly. When that happened, I hit Brian on it. I went to Brian and I said, "Brian, why? That was our song." He said, "Well, Rich, still it was my music. We needed it for this other album, we needed it for the album. We didn't use your words." He had the music. I don't remember if it was Christian... it must have been Christian that came up with "Car Crazy Cutie," the words to that music. So, then it was totally Brian's. "Car Crazy Cutie" was totally his, music and words.
- BE: Did Brian re-record the track for "Car Crazy Cutie?"
- RA: You got it. But "Pamela Jean" was not re-recorded. The record I have, the one that came out, the one that was pressed, is not the Beach Boys. I'll swear to it in court. There wasn't one Beach Boy involved in "Pamela Jean," except for Brian, of course.
- Shortly thereafter, I had a falling out with Dave Nowlen. Dave and I didn't see eye-to-eye a lot and we went our own ways. I

- was gonna get my own place. It was probably September of that year, when school was starting again. I was supposed to go to college and Brian asked me not to, to stay with him. At that time, Brian wanted to rent this house. I think it was on 104th Street.
- Bob, Brian and I lived there in late '63, through '64. The three of us lived in this house, with no furniture, mattresses on the floor, vitamin pills in the kitchen. We never ate right. We'd sleep during the day and just stay up all night in recording sessions or just write songs.
- BE: Where did the B-side of the Survivors single come from? "After The Game?"
- DN: It came from the house on 104th Street, in Inglewood. In the back of that house, they had a bedroom and Bob Norberg had a bunch of recording equipment set up in there. We had already done and mastered the A-side. They needed a B-side. So Brian just said, "I'll take care of it."
- RA: We sat with a Wollensak tape recorder in Bob's room. He was strumming on an electric guitar that was not hooked up and Brian was humming and fooling around with a guitar.
- DN: Brian's attempting to play the guitar and he makes a couple of mistakes in it.
- RA: The drums that you think you hear, that clunk-clunk-clunk in the background, is me hitting the damn bedpost of Bob's bed with a drumstick. We didn't write it. It was just an improvisational piece. We never went into a studio to cut that. It was cut in that house on 104th Street. From there it was out as the B-side. That was "After The Game."
- BE: What happened when the Survivors single was finally released?
- DN: The first thing that I remember is rushing around to every record store that I could find in Southern California and asking them... running up and asking them if they had a copy of the Survivors' record called "Pamela Jean." A lot of them did. I made sure that they knew that I was one of the group.
- When you're 20 years old, it's really strange to be hit with something like that. For the first time, I realized what it was like to have a record out on the market that people really heard. I had had one out on the market before, that got airplay only in a very small town, back in Michigan. But for the first time, I had a record out on a major label. All of a sudden you realize what people like Brian must feel when we're driving down the road in his car and he hears: "And now, the number-one tune for the last EIGHT weeks in Southern California, by the Beach Boys, 'Surfer Girl.'" Although at the time, it never really seemed to bother him, when we were just riding around in his beat-up old car. Later on, I'm pretty sure that it did affect him. It's pretty obvious that it has affected him in some ways.



I guess for the first time I saw what it was like to have something out on a major label. Coming from being a farm kid and coming from a small community, I'm not sure I would have been able to handle the popularity if it had developed.

BE: Did "Pamela Jean" get any airplay?

DN: Very little. At that time, there was KFVB and... I can't remember the other station in town, in Hollywood. They were the ones playing the record. It was only in the market for a month, six weeks, something like that. I was spending all of my money buying records and sending them to all my friends, hoping to boost sales or something. I went back to the record stores a month or six weeks later and the record had already been recalled.

Then you kind of lose track of things. It seems like a hundred years ago now. I can't remember ever inquiring of Brian as to what happened to it. I guess everybody realized that it sounded like Dion and it was in competition with him. It hadn't gotten that much airplay, so I guess everybody just figured the thing was a flop and we'd go on to make another one.

Bob Norberg was doing his own thing. Rich and I were still chumming around together. Brian seemed to have less and less time to spend with us. He was running around with Marilyn at the time and I had been out, kind of on double dates, with he and Marilyn, but it seemed like now he's up at her parents' house, spending a lot of time up there. He gave her mother and father a huge freezer for their anniversary, one of these huge refrigerator-freezers.

To be honest with you, I can't remember how the thing fell apart. I remember there was a lot of tension because Brian was going with a Hollywood crowd. He was starting to get away from Hawthorne and spending a lot more of his time up around Hollywood, with 'those' people up there. We all thought they were 'Hollywood weird' or something.

I still went to the Beach Boys' recording sessions, and Brian and I still saw each other. The incident that kind of set things off between Brian and I happened at Gold Star Studios. There was a guy there named Sheb Wooley, the one who made "Purple People Eater." One of the engineers who had seen me around with Brian lots of times introduced me to Sheb Wooley: "This is Dave Nowlen. he's with the Beach Boys." I just stuck my hand out to shake the guy's hand and Brian slapped my hand real hard and said, "You're not one of the Beach Boys. What the hell do you think you're doing?" It just kind of pissed me off, because I had never tried to pretend that I was one of the Beach Boys. I got pretty upset with Brian and I didn't see him more than half a dozen times after that.

BE: You told me there was a third Survivors song, written but never recorded.

DN: Yeah, it's called "A Joyride Cruise." As a matter of fact, "A Joyride Cruise" may have been the words to the melody that I stole, now that I think back on it. (laughs) That's really

A Joyride Cruise By *BRIAN Wilson*

DRAP WHAT YOU'RE DOIN' NOW AND COME AS YOU

WE'LL GRAB A BITE TO EAT AND THEN WE'LL JUMP IN MY CAR

I ALREADY FILLED MY TANK WITH SUPER SUPREME

WE'LL CRUISE THROUGH THE CITY, WE CAN LET OFF SOME STEAM

(BABY JUST YOU AND ME WE'LL TAKE A JOYRIDE CRUISE)

WE'VE GOTTA WORRY NOT A SWEAT IN THE WORLD

WE'RE DRIVIN' UP A STORM JUST A BOY AND A GIRL

WE'RE CHOPPIN' ALL THE PEOPLE THAT WE SEE IN THE TOWN

SHE'S FUNNIER THAN FUNNY, I'M A REGULAR CLOWN

(BABY JUST YOU AND ME - WELL -)

(8)

Note: The lyric of "A Joyride Cruise" is in Brian's handwriting.

strange. Yeah, I have a song called "A Joyride Cruise." Brian wrote a song called "A Joyride Cruise" and I have it in his long-hand in this music folder. I can't remember if that was a song the Survivors were going to do. It must have been.

EE: Planned as a follow-up to "Pamela Jean?"

DN: I think it was between "Wich Stand" and "Pamela Jean." I don't remember why we didn't do it.

EE: You parted with Brian sometime during '64.

DN: Yeah, in late '64. Then I took the melody, that particular melody that Brian had written, and I sat down and wrote words, called "Beach Girl." He had laid down a track, just a basic music track, just how the melody would go, with himself and Bob Norberg in their apartment on a home recording unit. It was just a bass and a rhythm guitar and somebody wacking on a magazine with a stick to make the drum beat. As a matter of fact, on the tape that I used to have, I'm sure it was Rich Alarian. He got off-beat several times and Brian said, "Goddammit, Rich, can't you carry a beat?" I'm sure it was Rich. He and Brian and Bob were in the apartment one day when I wasn't around and they made this track for "A Joyride Cruise."

I didn't steal it. I ended up with a copy that Bob Norberg had given me.

In fact, I'm really disappointed, because I had a whole reel, a big 7½-inch reel, of recording sessions with Brian and the Beach Boys that Bob had taken off a master in the studio, where they made a lot of mistakes. They stopped and started over and yelled "shit" and all kinds of things. I took it with me, don't ask me why, when I went to Cambodia. When I got evacuated from Cambodia, they only let you take out two suitcases and I naturally brought out the things that I thought were important to me and I left that there. Now I wish I had it.

So, the track gave me an idea of how I wanted to make a song go. I wrote the words to follow that melody. I took their basic track and just redid it, took my own musicians and recorded it. I had three other guys who were working with me. They were the guys that I was already working with the day that I met Brian, when he knocked on the door.

("Beach Girl" was recorded at Western Recorders in January 1965.)

I took the master from that over to Richard Vaughn, who was the president at the time of Arvee/Hi-Fi Records. Gold Records was the rock-and-roll section of that. He came out and asked, "Did you write this?" I said, "Yes." I mean, I wrote the words, I didn't tell him I didn't write the rhythm. He said, "Okay, fine, we'll do it." He asked, "Can you produce a B-side?" and I said yes. I went home and wrote a song called "Gypsy." "Gypsy" was a real nice ballad. It was a real nice song that we did with four vocals on it and harmony.

It came out in March or April 1965. On "Beach Girl," the song-writing credit just says "David E. Nowlen" down underneath the name of the group.

The word that Richard Vaughn gave me was that he was going to send the record out to the different radio stations around Los Angeles and see if it got airplay. Then, if it got airplay, they were going to go into production. So there may just be promotional copies.

BE: What was the name of the group?

DN: It was called the Nodaens. I know that sounds strange. We couldn't come up with a name for the group, so my first name was Dave and my last name was Nowlen, so they put No-da-ens. I admit it was a little crazy, but...

I only have one copy of the record left and I left the damn thing laying out... the record laid in the back of the car in the sun and it got crinkled. It got crinkled to the point where you can just barely play one end of the B-side, "Gypsy."

You might also be interested in a record Bob Norberg and I did.

Bob had quite a bit of electronics gear in his room. He had a couple of recorders and he was really sharp in knowing exactly how to work the stuff so that you could overdub and get echo effects and things like that. He was really talented at that.

I wrote a song called "Surfer's Sunset," an instrumental. When I say wrote, I've never been able to read anything other than a lead note, so I would make up a song in my head and just play it enough times through to where I had it down. I wrote the song in my head and went over to Bob's and Brian's and played it for him and he really liked it. He offered to do the bass line on it and he not only did the bass line on it, but he did the wooden block thing and it came out really nice. That's the first one I took to the people at Arvee. I took that one to Richard Vaughn and he didn't want to do an instrumental, mainly because it's five minutes long. He never took it, but we did the master tape and cut a demo record of it and took it over to Arvee. To show you how naive I was, once I'd been turned down by somebody, I never went back to anybody else. If I was ever going to make it in the music business, it was going to be something that I stumbled on. Back when I was younger, I never knew enough to go to eight, ten record companies and have them all close the door in your face. I went to one and they said no, and I said, "Okay, fine. I quit."

BE: Rich, were you involved with any of the later Beach Boys albums, like Shut Down Vol 2 or All Summer Long?

RA: No. I had nothing to do with those. That was when Brian decided he was going to participate with the guys again.

BE: How did you and Brian finally part company?

RA: First, Bob moved out. He had a girlfriend and he left to go with



her. Brian and I stayed together for probably another four, five, six months. We were at the 104th Street house almost a year. We split up because he moved in with Marilyn at her mom's and dad's house.

We'd have sessions at night and when we were done, Brian would say, "Well, take the car home, Rich. I'm gonna stay over at Marilyn's house." He started staying at her house because it was easier than driving back to Inglewood and back the next day to Hollywood. That went on for about a month or so. I'd come home and I felt, "Gee, I'm a caretaker. He doesn't give a shit about me anymore." The friendship was slowly going away to Marilyn. I figured, "Hey, I've got a life of my own. Am I going to sit here and waste it, being a caretaker for the guy?" So I went my own way. I think I moved in with another of my friends that I was starting college with. I don't know what Brian did with the house after that. It was a rental thing. He had it on a lease.

Shortly thereafter, Steve Love moved in with us. I'd met him through Mike. He and I became good friends. In fact, Steve Love was best man at my wedding. So then I was involved that way. I'd still hear all the stuff that was going on and we'd go over to Mike's house. He'd bought a place in Playa del Rey.

Then Brian came out with Pet Sounds. That's when he was getting into the drug cult. At the time, the girl that I was going with wanted to meet Brian Wilson, so I got back into the picture. For a month maybe, I'd go over to the house on Sierra Bonita and hang around with them. I realized that he was going off the deep end. Brian wasn't the Brian I remembered. He had really changed in that year's time. That was shortly after he had made Pet Sounds. And then I just disappeared from the scene.

You know that guy was so straight. You know, like Jack Nitzsche, he was a heavy loader. Phil Spector was a freak. All of these people we used to run into, they'd smoke pot or take acid. Brian never, and I can attest to this, when we lived together Brian never fooled with that crap. He never did. But that Pet Sounds album, he was totally loaded when they made that.

A lot of success went to his head fast. I saw that happening. Everybody that we ever ran into when we were together, the first words that came out of their mouths were, "You're a genius."

EE: Do you think he was?

RA: I think he was, until he started going off the other end. It happened when he did Pet Sounds. I was at the house then. It was then he started getting heavy into drugs. It went to his head. The genius thing went to his head. When he was clean, he was talented.

We used to sit and things would come out of him. He was a genius, he really was. That man could sit at the piano and come up with a verse, with music, to a song. He'd throw stuff at me all the time. We'd sit there and we'd throw words around. We used to play music all the time. There were so many songs that Brian came up with when we were together that were never recorded.

There was a thing called "Thank Him:" (singing) "Thank him for a beauty so rare, Thank him for our lo-o-o-o-ove." And we did a whole thing on that, a chorus. It was beautiful. It was done on the Wollensak recorder. He went to Radio Recorders and we put that thing on a disc and it went on a shelf. There were so many things like that. And it was a beautiful song. It was like going down to the ocean and the shells... It was a love song, it was a beautiful love song.

EE: Do you recall a song written for the Survivors called "A Joyride Cruise?"

RA: Yeah, but nothing ever happened with that. We'd do a lot of stuff where we'd do a track. It would be a demo and it would go on the shelf.

EE: What was Brian like back then? What was it like working with him?

DN: He was just a fun-loving, easy-going guy, a little bit forgetful sometimes. A couple of times, I remember, we drove all the way up to the studio to do some work on a mixdown. We'd get all the way up there and he'd go, "Oh shit, I forgot the tapes. They're back in the apartment." We'd turn around and drive all the way back to Hawthorne.

It's like, here we are lying on a floor in an apartment with no furniture in it and this is the day that he called the Pontiac dealer. He was getting rid of his Chevy Impala, this old warrior that he had, and this was his first car that he was buying with money that he had made as a record producer. So he had ordered this car and it came in. I was in the apartment when they called to tell him that the car was in and Brian's on the phone. I can't tell the conversation that's going on at the other end, but I can hear his side of the conversation. He said, "Yeah, okay, well it's here, but it doesn't have power windows like I ordered." Then there was a little bit more conversation and he said, "And it doesn't have the stereo in it either, huh? Oh, well, okay." And I said, (whispering) "Brian, ask them if it's got doors." And God, he just died cracking up and said, "Hey, has it got DOORS?"

He was always up for a good time. We laughed a lot, but he was lonely too. There were many nights when he came over after midnight and knocked on my door and asked me if I wanted to come with him down to Norm's, an all-night restaurant about three-quarters of a mile down the road, and get something to eat. He was by himself a lot, just by himself, alone. He was lonely and didn't want to go down there and eat by himself. This one time, he took a jar of pennies in a mason jar down there. I swear to God, he had this whole mason jar filled with pennies and he was going to pay for his meal with these pennies. I was so embarrassed that I paid for his meal, rather than have him count out these pennies on the counter. The woman that waited on him, she knew who he was and she wanted a record for her daughter, and here's Brian with this jar of pennies and he's gonna count out these pennies and pay for his meal.

I saw him in a sensitive way... I really believe, I sincerely



believe he cared about people. He was interested in us as individuals. I really sincerely think that he tried to give us a break.

Then I would see him in a rage with his father. It seems like every time we got around the house that he just went crazy.

I've seen him in a thinking mood. We were sitting in the Wich Stand one day in his car and he comes up with "Well, way up north, where the air gets cold, there's a tale about Christmas that you've all been told." And he wrote the song right there in the car. He could think the harmony parts in his head, he could think the words in his head and remember them until he could get to someplace where he could write them down on paper.

EE: Do you think Brian is a musical genius?

DN: Music is a funny thing. If you listen hard enough and long enough to music the person who didn't know very much about music could take the parts and go into a studio and put them together and make sounds. I think the Beach Boys came along at the perfect time to enjoy the popularity that they did. The kids were ready for a change. Cars were a popular thing and surfing was a popular thing. But when you start listening to some of their early songs, the vocals... they weren't really that hot.

I don't know if I'd classify him as a genius. I think that's a lot of what happened to Brian. He just had a lot of talent. He wasn't a genius. He's got an enormous amount of talent, but if you classify him as a genius, that puts him up on a pedestal and I think that's what helped to ruin his life... people classifying him, telling him he was fantastic and that he had perfect pitch and all of these things.

EE: When did you last see Brian?

DN: I talked to him on the phone about 1972. I had come out with a country-and-western record on an independent label. I talked to Brian because I wanted him to hear what I had done. I sent him a copy of it, then called him about a week later while I was in Los Angeles and talked to him on the phone. He said that he had listened to it and said it was good and he was glad that I was headed in that direction. If it made me happy, fine. They called him from the office... they used to have an office just off Hollywood Boulevard on Ivar Street, upstairs there. They called him. That's the last time I talked to him.

RA: Two years ago, I think it was, (actually Oct. 4, 1980) Brian was on a special on "K-Hits" (KHTZ radio). I called and I tried to talk to him. I wasn't any stranger. I said, "It would be nice someday, Brian, to just get together and talk. It's been a long time and I really miss you." He seemed like he wanted to get together.

I called back again, when the show was over, just as it was ending. Brian was still in the booth and he couldn't come to the phone, so they put on one of his right-hand men who stays with Brian. He comes on and I asked him if I could have Brian's number and I gave him my phone number and name. His friend told me that Brian would get back to me. I never heard from him.

Rare Tracks

by Gary Gidman

ON AND ON SHE GOES (With Me Tonight)

Sandy Salisbury (Together 139, 1967?)

This recording from the late Sixties has to be one of the more curious choices of Brian Wilson songs to be covered by another artist. No doubt a small attempt to capitalize on the popularity of "Good Vibrations" and the release of Smiley Smile, this version differs significantly from the Beach Boys' original.

The identity of Sandy Salisbury is unknown. Production credit for "On and On She Goes" is given to Curt Boettcher and Keith Olsen, which, coupled with Together Records' being run by Gary Usher, certainly places this project within the Beach Boys' outer circle of friends and co-workers.

Production, and performance-wise, this is a strong effort. Of real interest here, however, is the arrangement, which seems to imply an interesting concept: that of mining the hidden commercial potential of an understated musical gem.

A brief comparison and contrast of the two versions will illustrate the idea. Where Brian's arrangement is direct, even blunt, adorning the unenhanced vocals with only one chording organ, and two bars of unobtrusive piano before the fade, the Salisbury version is full-blown, built around piano, bass, and drums, with a saxophone section doubling background vocals (a la "California Girls"); a bass harmonica and left-hand piano combining with the bass guitar on the verses (a timbral conceit from Pet Sounds, especially "I Know There's An Answer"); and even a vibraphone on the fadeout.

An extra thirty eight seconds of play is achieved in the Salisbury version by modulating upward one half-step, repeating the verse a third time, and concluding with the full chorus section, which, on Brian's version, is used only once. The eight-bar bridge which connects this extra music is based on Brian's second bridge in "I Get Around" (the "ooh" section).

Brian's melody adapts effortlessly to the treatment given here. He has been quoted as saying that he felt the musical content of his work outweighed his lyrics, and here we have a piece of music which would arguably stand up to any lyrical or stylistic direction.

However, Brian has also stated that his songs are attempts at capturing a feeling, something greater than the sum of lyric and music. Here is where Salisbury's "On And On She Goes" falls short. On Smiley Smile the mood was undeniably intimate, warm and close, small-scale, and even brief. It was the most sympathetic treatment imaginable, used to describe a moment's thought, which is the lyric. On the other hand, the cover version is a protracted celebration of that moment, and seems, ultimately, to lose something to this listener.

While the above criticism may be true, this recording is still a very pleasurable listening experience, with its undeniable bounce, and understanding of Brian's work. It is a notable addition to that class of cover versions of Brian Wilson songs which come from the heart, -like Kirsty MacColl's "You Still Believe In Me," and Lindsey Buckingham's (&Fleetwood Mac's) "Farmer's Daughter."

Together Records



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Song Scrutiny: **Surfin' USA-Fun Fun Fun**

by Don Cunningham

1963's "Surfin' U.S.A." and 1964's "Fun Fun Fun" are two Brian Wilson creations which, for many reasons, deserve to be analyzed in the same breath. To average Beach Boy fans (that large number of listeners who could not care any less about the unreleased versions of "Good Vibrations," the tonal complexity of "God Only Knows," or the lyrical majesty of "Surf's Up")—"Surfin' U.S.A." and "Fun Fun Fun" are examples of quintessential Beach Boys style, including easy chord progressions, terrific harmonies, soaring falsetto, a fast rock and roll pace, and especially, that nasal, high-E-flat lead vocal of Mike Love.

However, for two songs that nearly sum up the early Sixties manifestation, 'Beach Boy music,' it comes as a small surprise that both "Surfin' U.S.A." and "Fun Fun Fun" showcase the sounds and impulses of an earlier artist and songwriter, Chuck Berry.

Brian Wilson's debt to Chuck Berry can not be any more obvious than in these two Beach Boy smashes, made in Brian's early developmental period. In "Surfin' U.S.A." Brian used the music of Berry's 1958 hit, "Sweet Little Sixteen," while for "Fun Fun Fun" Brian stole the famous guitar introduction from Berry's other top-ten hit of 1958, "Johnny B. Goode."

Yet the influence of Chuck Berry would go much deeper in Brian's art. The musical philosophy and essence of Berry's music helped to shape, to some degree, Brian Wilson's concept of what his own popular music should be, and it therefore pervaded Brian's canon. In 1976, twelve years after "Surfin' U.S.A.," Brian scored a top-ten hit with a version of Berry's "Rock & Roll Music." That later recording stands as a tribute to a music which helped shape Brian's own artistic triumphs throughout his career.

Chuck Berry was a rhythm-and-blues guitar player who stumbled onto success with "Maybelline," the 1955 hit which contained more of the upbeat qualities associated with what was being called 'rock and roll,' than the more lugubrious rhythms and tones of classic r&b. Berry rearranged his priorities to accommodate the livelier and more popular rock and roll style, as he wrote and recorded his famous string of rock and roll classics in the later part of the Fifties.

In addition to a catalogue of rich, inventive lyrics, Berry's dozen-or-so classic recordings offered the world a legacy of r&b influenced guitar motifs. These guitar stylings were as much a definition of rock and roll as were his simple harmonic progressions, and speeded up 4:4 time.

Brian alluded to his Chuck Berry debt in 1981, when he said, "Surfing music at that time wasn't really anything but your Chuck Berry

THE BEACH BOYS

FUN, FUN, FUN

WHY DO FOOLS FALL IN LOVE

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guitar, with your Brian, Dennis, and Carl, and Michael harmonizing their vocal chords, -a good family blend.

In that typically modest pronouncement Brian failed to mention a few other things, especially if he was referring to Beach Boys' "surfing music." (The term "surfing music" is an unfortunate one; it better describes a kind of instrumental music from the early Sixties, like that of Dick Dale.) In the case of Brian's use of Chuck Berry ideas, the case can certainly be made that not only were Brian's own contributions substantial, but they equalled Berry's work in terms of innovation and artistic depth, -even in the early days of 1963.

Rock and Roll was more rhythm than blues, and "Sweet Little Sixteen" was a perfect example. Berry devised lyrics which reflected a more optimistic pop culture, and he used faster rhythm, which demanded that you dance.

Brian Wilson showed genius in using what was best in Chuck Berry's music, and adding what was best about Brian and the Beach Boys.

Berry's recording of "Sweet Little Sixteen" contains four crucial elements: (1) his classic rhythm guitar chops, (2) a constant cymbal, (3) crude bass arpeggios, (4) drum and piano embellishment. Outside the crude bass lines, none of those elements serves to define tonal concepts. Indeed, Chuck Berry music is almost atonal, even when one considers the easy I-IV-V changes and limited vocal range. Berry's music is instead a celebration of rhythm.

In "Surfin' U.S.A.," Brian Wilson took that rhythmic concern and added rich, tonal concepts. (As has been said too often, he "added harmony.") In 1963 Brian kept the guitar, electrified the bass, dropped the piano and cymbal, and added the Beach Boys' voices in their place.

Although the Beach Boy backgrounds in "Surfin' U.S.A." were unsurprising Four Freshmen chords, devoid of any counterpoint, they were nevertheless completely refreshing in 1963. Most importantly, Beach Boy harmony contained a unique synergism based upon genetically related voices: what Brian called the "family blend." Many of the more successful vocal harmony groups have been family affairs: the Mills Brothers; the Everly Brothers; the Bee Gees; the Beach Boys. In these groups similar voices with slight (and only slight) differences create a kind of two-level harmony. On one level are the differences in tone; on another level are differences in nuance. And this can not be duplicated.

Your local rock group disappoints you when they attempt to sing a Beach Boy song because their voices are too disparate. On the other hand, a single voice, overdubbed many times, will also produce an unsatisfying harmony. A good example of that is the version of "Wouldn't It Be Nice" which Brian Wilson completed by himself when the Beach Boys were touring in 1966. He sang all the parts, and the result was a harmony that was flat, that lacked resonance.

Brian's addition of background harmony in "Surfin' U.S.A." improved the tonal facts in an obvious way, yet he also made slight changes in the melody.

In "Sweet Little Sixteen" Chuck Berry's vocal is highly melismatic. As in jazz singing, energy is derived from the manner in which the vocal-melody strays from the tonal root. Berry's extremely limited vocal range demanded that kind of melody. In "Surfin' U.S.A." the lead vocals of Mike Love ("If everybody had an ocean...") and Brian Wilson ("Everybody's gone surfin'") are much more lyrical in both the nature of their voices, and the actual notes sung. There is no comparison between Brian's "everybody's gone surfin'," and Berry's "all the cats wanna dance with." Brian's two-octave leap to falsetto can be considered a rewrite of the melody, as it radically changes the spirit of the song.

Let's move on to production. In England, in 1963, the Beatles, like the Beach Boys, forged a new musical style based upon rock and roll rhythms. Brian Wilson and the Beatles shared in the common appreciation of Chuck Berry's rhythmic sensibility, yet in creating their own records, both moved to a stronger, or heavier drum sound. As a further note, a difference between Brian's early rock and roll sound and that of the Beatles lay in a production concern: the Beatles augmented Berry's cymbal, while Brian dropped it. Compare the Beatles' "Rock & Roll Music" with the Beach Boys' "Surfin' U.S.A."

In the backing track to the verses of "Sweet Little Sixteen" Berry's signature rhythm guitar stands out, although in retrospect it appears modest. The simplicity of his entire production reflects the values of an earlier era, when lush harmonies and complex instrumentation were necessarily eschewed.

By 1963 recording techniques and record-pressing quality had improved vastly, -so much so, that Phil Spector could realize his dream of a "wall of sound."

Brian was too inexperienced to be messing around with a wall of sound in 1963. It was enough that the rhythm track of "Surfin' U.S.A." showed imaginative dynamic improvement over that of Brian's first rock and roll hit, "Surfin'." Brian did not begin to emulate Phil Spector's instrumental wall of sound until 1964, and "Fun Fun Fun" was an early example.

"Surfin' U.S.A." had been a hybrid of Berry rhythms and Beach Boy harmonics. "Fun Fun Fun" was influenced as much by Phil Spector as by Berry, and it offered a mature synthesis in sound rather than a hybrid of styles.

There in the first measure -behind the lead guitar- is the carefully orchestrated percussive assault. Mixed expertly, drums, guitar, bass, and sleighbells coalesce into a whole, -a new sound that resonates, and fires the imagination. It is a heady mix, and it is what

Spector did first. Brian had taken surprisingly little time in mastering it.

With the wall of sound you don't hear each instrument, only the larger result of mixed instruments. This is truly production as an art. In "Fun Fun Fun," even the guitar and organ lines in the break seem to lose their individual personalities, coming together in a unique result.

Compare the break in "Surfin' U.S.A." with that of "Fun Fun Fun." The former also involves both organ and guitar, but in such a way as to say, "This is the organ part," and "This is the guitar part." It is like the young artist who is just learning how to put colors together.

Although Spector's influence on Brian has been cited many times, two things should be added: (1) the quickness with which Brian mastered Phil's sound,—"Fun Fun Fun" was made in January, 1964, seven months after "Da Doo Ron Ron," and four months after Brian's favorite, "Be My Baby," and (2) how Brian moved on from Phil's sound.

By the end of 1964, Brian was producing records which did not simply emulate Spector's wall of sound. In songs like "She Knows Me Too Well," for the Today album, Brian was coming up with his own pet sounds—a smooth guitar sound; a mellow bass—while maintaining Spector's philosophy of the importance of the overall sound.

In "Fun Fun Fun" there is more movement in the harmonies, and there is a greater sense of 'voices as instruments'—much moreso than in "Surfin' U.S.A." At the end Brian Wilson lets go with a soaring vocal leap that became one of the more famous falsetto figures in popular music,—right up there with Frankie Valli in "Walk Like A Man."

It is unfortunate that radio stations always play the album version of "Fun Fun Fun," because although the single version is nearly identical, it contains one bonus: the vocal tag continues for a much longer time. Like the ending of a Beach Boys' concert.

In going from "Sweet Little Sixteen" to "Surfin' U.S.A.," to "Fun Fun Fun," we witness the emergence of art: from a rough exposition of a genre, to an experimental combination of styles, to an artistic creation surpassing genre and style; from bluesman Chuck Berry, to production genius Phil Spector, to consummate artist, Brian Wilson.

Collector's Note: When "Surfin' U.S.A." was released in 1963 the label credited Brian Wilson as author. Immediately, Chuck Berry's publishing company (Berry was in jail) sued the Beach Boys and won. From that point on, all records credit "Surfin' U.S.A." to Chuck Berry (alone). Only that original 1963 single credits Brian. Furthermore, after the legal decision, Berry's record company issued an album which promised "Surfin' U.S.A." on the cover, yet which contained "Sweet Little Sixteen."



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letters

Don:

Last Saturday (this was in March) I went to the VIP lounge in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and saw The Crystals. Boy can they sing. The back-up sound of Spector was missed, and the back-up band was barely adequate. They did all their hits, plus "Heat Wave," "Dancin' In The Street," "We Are Family," and other songs.

But the highlight was "Be My Baby," plus "Surfin' Safari," and "Surfin' U.S.A." -which they said "Were written by a guy named Brian, who meant as much to us as our mentor, Phil."

Mike Clark
New Cumberland, Pa.

Don:

Some info which you and other Beach Boy fans may wish to know:
(1) Carl Wilson is the cover-feature story of the Aquarian Weekly, Issue no. 466, April 13, 1983, P.O. Box 137, Montclair, N.J. 07042. Newsstand price: \$1.00. Routine story, except the Manson issue is posed to Carl. Pretty interesting.

(2) Billy Joel and Dean Torrence joined the band in a live performance Friday, April 8, at the Brendan Byrne Meadowlands Arena, Secaucus, N.J. Brian was absent. A real fine show. The band was up; so was the audience, because of the James Watt controversy. Billy Joel played keyboards on "Help Me Rhonda" and "Rock & Roll Music." He did not sing. Torrence sang lead on "Barbara Ann" along with Bruce.

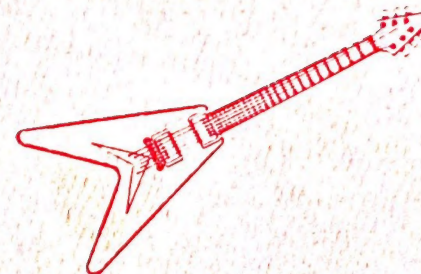
Dave Schopperth
Paterson, N.J.

Editor:

p.s. Billy Joel used to be an opening act for the Beach Boys.

Doug Kusiak
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